



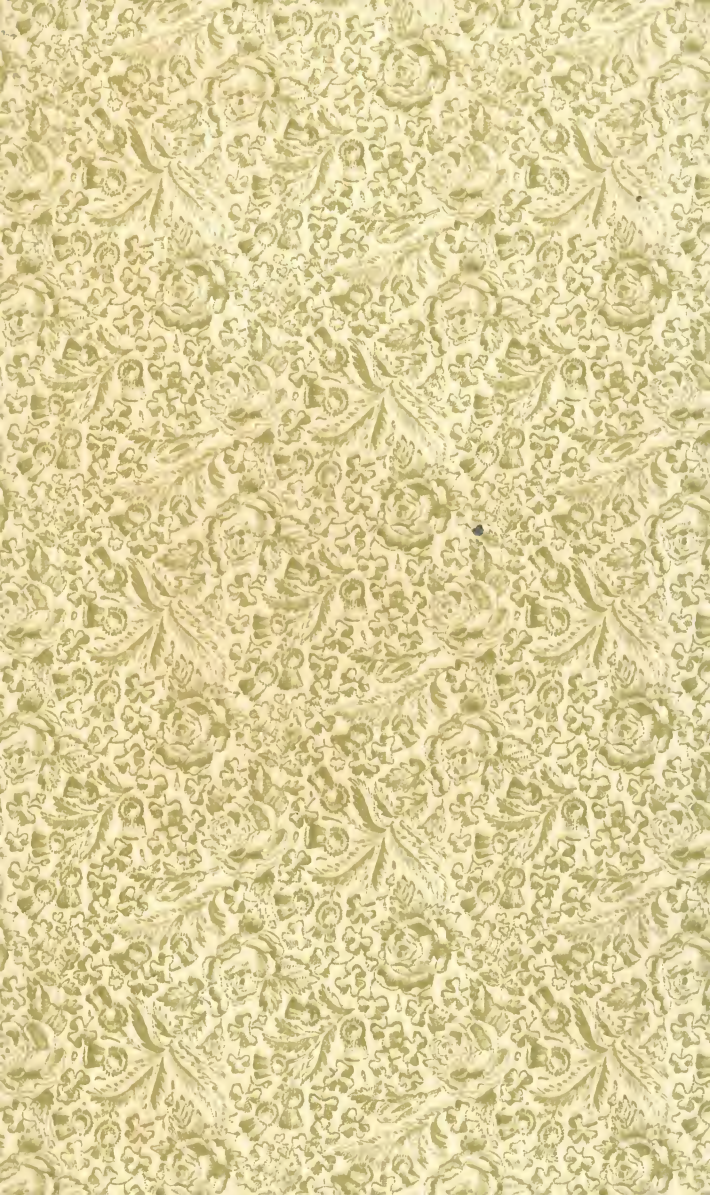
MANNIN

VEG VEEN

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MANNIN ISLE OF MAN 2014



With best wishes
from the Author,

W. Gell.

Mannin Veg Veen.



Photo by]

MANNIN'S VICE-REGAL LODGE.

[Warburton, Douglas.

*'Tis Mona the lone where the silver mist gathers,
Pale shroud whence our wizard chief watches unseen,
O'er the breezy, the bright, the loved home of my fathers,
Oh! Mannin my graih, my chree, Mannin Veg Veen!*

E. NELSON



MANNIN VEG VEEN

A POETICAL SKETCH OF THE
ISLE OF MAN



By W. GELL

Printed by S. K. Broadbent & Co. Limited,
Isle of Man Examiner Office, Douglas

1906

Inscribed

IN THE PROFOUNDEST RESPECT AND ESTEEM

TO THAT

ILLUSTRIOUS MANXMAN AND SCHOLAR,

A. W. MOORE ESQ.,

M.A., C.V.O.,

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF KEY

P R E F A C E

This poem is specially written for the Manx people at home and abroad, though I venture to think it will appeal to all who are interested in the Island and its remarkable associations. For steering a straight course I have been largely indebted to Mr. Moore's invaluable History of the Island; various publications of the Manx Society; the Rev. J. Quine's "Isle of Man Illustrated"; and the Rev. J. Cumming's "Story of Castle Rushen." The reader will observe that, throughout, it is rhymed in triplets, and is probably the most lengthy example of that style in existence, and my chief desire is that it may find a place on every loyal Manxman's shelf.

THE AUTHOR



- Mannin Veg Veen -

Peculiarity's perplexing plight
Resolve thee, muse, to guide my pen aright,
The more, as I myself resolved this time
To chant our three-legg'd fame in three-
legg'd rhyme.

* * * *

Canto I.



To th' Elysium of the Sea
On the wings of fancy free,
Reader, come and trip with me.
Turn we now from rude alarms
To thy sweet, perplexing charms,
Mannin Veen—with "legs" for "arms"!

Skim we first the rocky coast
Where the Viking ruled the roast,
Type of Europe's barbaric host,
Denizen of creek and bay,
Corsair of the ancient day
When the Norse-kings held their sway.

Solitude, thy charms have fled
From the brows of Douglas Head,
Where the lanterns nightly shed
Mercy's beams with radiant flash,
Bidding those unduly rash—
"Ware the breakers' rending crash"!

When the billow's hoary crest
Ribb'd on ocean's troubled breast,
Speaks of Neptune's grim unrest!
Towering cliffs the timid daunt,
Once the fearless urchin's haunt,
Now electric traction's jaunt.

Here of yore in secret cave
 Lawless crews the guns would brave
 Precious contraband to save :
 Disciples of Dirk Hatterick,*
 Customs' revenue to trick—
 Did the guard—and did it slick.

Coasting round Port Soderick Bay,
 Note we through the summer day
 Youth and age alike at play ;
 Santon's serried barriers mark—
 Woe to the belated bark
 Tempest-driven in the dark !

Derbyhaven's airy creek.
 Furnishes to those who seek
 Refuge from the city's reek ;
 Nigh, the isolated fort
 Reared in days of warlike sport :
 Antiquarian's resort.

Hard by, the famous race was run—
 Ere Epsom's fame had well begun
 The Derby stakes were lost and won !

Crouching Langness, long-drawn-out
 Like the alligator's snout ;
 Here the winds hold revel rout,
 But aloft, sweet mercy's light
 Flashes through tempestuous night
 To guide the mariner aright.

Castletown Bay note we in brief,
 Double-tongued with rugged reef
 Tread'rous as the midnight thief ;
 Here the youth of yore would swim,
 Laving body, head, and limb :
 Healthful toilet—Nature's "Vim" !

Monolithic, Scarlett Stack
 Proud repels the wave's attack,
 Hurling bold defiance back ;

* *Vide* Scott's "Guy Mannering."

Mark the wilderness of rock
 Furrowed by the tempests' shock—
 Detachments hewn from Nature's stock.

Poolvash quarries, now in view,
 Gave Saint Paul's—when reared anew—
 Marble stair of dusky hue;

Port St. Mary, nestling near,
 Calls back scenes to memory dear,
 Now, alas! in sad arrears:
 May the good time come again
 When crews would struggle might and main
 To drag the weighted herring-train!

Bluff Spanish Head, in giant loom,
 Here tempest spake, with awful boom,
 Th' "Invincible Armada's" doom!

That huge and mighty armament,
 Imperious Spain to represent,
 Had come on schemes of conquest bent:
 Sought they Britannia's rein to take,
 Proud Pontiff hov'ring in their wake—
 But reckoned not with gallant Drake!

Failed they to gain the prize they sought,
 But were a wholesome lesson taught—
 Experience oft is dearly bought!
 Learn ye, who would these shores molest,
 Britannia's sons still do their best,
 The God of Battles does the rest!

Be this the burden of our song:
 May Britain still united, strong,
 Defend the right, and right the wrong;
 May this great Union never melt,
 But still be girdled in one belt
 The Gael, the Saxon, and the Celt!

Mysterious fissures pierce this height,*
 Whose yawning depths elude the sight
 In regions of eternal night!

* The Chasms.

Who reads aright the mvstery, knows
How mother-earth's convulsive throes
Disturb her outward calm repose.

Placid, just beyond the Sound,
Lies the realm of king uncrowned—
"Cary's Isle"—the world-renowned!
Oh, thou strange and wondrous "Calf,"
Thy productions make us laugh—
Little grain, but heaps of "chaff"!

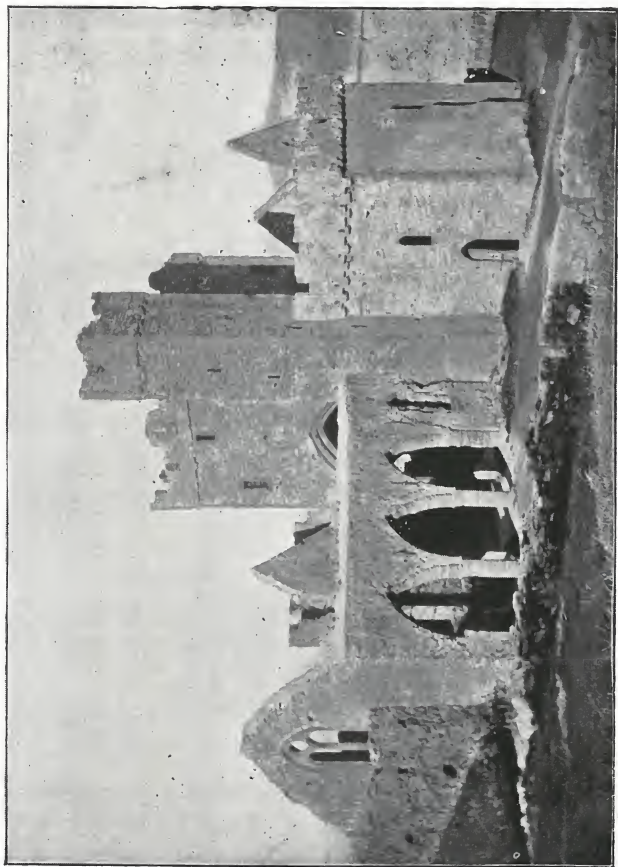
"Chickens" break the prospect dreary,
Though no brood of "Mother Cary,"
Storm-tossed mariner—be wary;
Look aloft, benighted tar,
"Trinity's" bright, guiding star
Sends thee greeting from afar!

Fair jewel-case—Port Erin Bay,
What heaps of treasure came thy way,
Alas! how valueless to-day!
Folly's monumental stones!
Mannin still—with sighs and groans
Man's ineptitude bemoans!

Here, in this choice well-favoured spot,
When wearied of the world's jog-trot,
Dame Fortune's pets oft cast their lot;
Thou bonnie village of the west,
When earth in brightest garb is drest,
Haven of calm and peaceful rest!

Awe-inspiring Bradda cliff,
Though the climb be long and stiff,
Glad the western breeze we sniff,
Reverent thv slopes we tread,
Trace we on thy stately head
Footsteps of th' illustrious dead;

Once revered among the just,
Now returned to mother-crust—
Earth to earth, and dust to dust!
Bold in silhouette outlined
Milner's Tower recalls to mind
Maxim trite—"Safe bind, safe find"!



ST. GERMAN'S CATHEDRAL.

While we north our way pursue,
 Note where distant hills of blue
 Lend enchantment to the view;
 Steal we glances to the left,
 Emerald Erin prompts the theft—
 Whence this dainty isle was cleft;
 Though mayhap fancy lends a spice,
 Tradition tells—how in a trice
 From Erin's bulk was carved a slice
 To form a joint connecting link
 With Albion, on the other brink!
 (At this sweet fiction—please to wink.)
 But Erin, thou fair witch, aroint!
 And lest our theme gets out of joint
 Return we now where Dalby Point
 Stands sentinel of fair Glenmay;
 Though sorely tempted—by the way
 We'll count its charms another day;
 And lest our typing friend be vex'd
 We here must quote the time-worn text—
 "To be continued in our next."



Canto II.



Now, reader, to resume our trip,
 Lest time should catch us on the hip,
 Still northward on our way we skip.
 First pass we under old Peel Hill,
 Where ev'ry Jack must strut his Jill—
 Preamble oft of Hymen's Bill,

That Bill which gives the thoughtful pause,
 For, sooth to say, the marriage laws
 Are oft esteemed as flimsy gauze.
 Hard by here, in Glenfaba's vale
 Was cradled that pathetic tale
 Of martyr'd "Storm" and "Glory Quayle."*

Dear reader—would you feel the better?
 From prejudice your mind unfetter,
 The spirit's true, if not the letter;
 Are you a patriot? then be just,
 A patriot here, true to his trust,
 Had scotched that snake—unhallowed lust!

Now halt we by St. Patrick's Isle,
 Here must we linger for a while
 To view the famous ruined pile;
 The weirdly fascinating spot
 From topmost tower to dungeon grot
 Descanted by th' immortal Scott:

Without those walls, once stoutly built,
 The trumpet oft with merry lilt
 Proclaimed the scene of joust and tilt,
 When belted knights sustained their fame,
 And maiden fair or courtly dame
 Would crown the victor in the game.

Within, where Time's dark shadows creep,
 Upreared from basement strong and deep
 Had soared aloft the massive keep;

* *Vide* Hall Caine's "Christian."

What memories round these fragments
cling!—

Here echoed oft thy footstep's ring,
"Illustrious Derby"—Mannin's King!

Beyond the precincts of the yard
Had stood the quarters of the guard
(All doubts just for the nonce discard).
One reckless wight, tradition ran,
Had sacrificed his mortal span
To lay the "spectral Hound of Man"! *

While sun attains his zenith pow'r,
Recline we for one restful hour,
O'ershaded by Fenella's Tower,
And dream, by old romancer's aid,
How would the Liliputian Maid
Her wondrous wealth of tresses braid;

With voice melodious as the lute—
Thou elfin maid, what vain pursuit
Had held thee through the years so mute?
Sprightly Fenella! lithe and brave,
The youthful Peveril's love to crave
Had leaped and dared the treach'rous
wave! †

Now turn aside from things mundane,
And reverent view this sacred fane:
How mute, yet eloquent its strain!
Methinks, how oft the Code Divine
Had issued from yon hallowed shrine,
Precept on precept, line on line;

How oft, amid the tempest's roar,
Devoutly from this sacred floor
Thought, for a space, would Heav'nward
soar,

And to that shrine would each repair—
Knight, man-at-arms, and lady fair—
To mingle in one common prayer,

* *Vide* Waldron.

† *Vide* Scott's "Peveril of the Peak."

And supplicate, in faith and fear,
 For that sweet mercy, ever near
 When falls the penitential tear!
 Thus are these lifeless stones made bread:
 The still, small Voice of Horeb's head
 Speaks to the living through the dead!

What though the wail from dungeon deep
 And war-cry from embrasured steep
 Are now for ever hushed in sleep,
 Thou sometime court of Mannin's Kings,
 Thy mould'ring frame unceasing sings
 The destinies of men and things!

Note how, upon this western shore,
 Succumbing to the ocean's bore
 Earth's fragments sink, to rise no more;
 Yet Nature's handmaids, wide awake,
 No ill-conditioned bargains make,
 But wise exchange of give and take.

And passing now by Jurby Point
 So gaunt and bare—the shoulder-joint
 (The rhyme here really must be coin't;
 But coin't or coined, it matters not,
 We simply give the best we've got,
 And license will condone the blot.)

Approach we now the Point of Ayre—
 Again, aloft, the beacon fair
 Bids watchful mariners beware!
 How fitly named, this point of light,
 For ambient air, at depth or height,
 Holds no appreciable weight;

Was coronet ever yet bedight
 With gem so fair—did crown of might
 E'er hold a jewel half so bright?

Across the channel just a glance
 At other Ayr, with weird romance
 Of "Alloway Kirk" and eerie dance,
 When "Tam o' Shanter," primed with ale,
 Had braved the eldritch witches' hale,
 And nothing lost but—"Maggie's tail"!*

* *Vide Burns' "Tam o' Shanter."*

Fair Caledonia aye dishonour spurns,
 Each leal and patriotic son inurns
 'The mem'ry of immortal "Bobbie Burns,"
 Of Wallace and of Bruce, of Scott and
 Miller,
 Carnegie hail—the mon o' muckle siller—
 Wi' trusty "Bannerman," wha hauds the
 tiller!

Some lusty callants travel south,
 Though stout of heart, oft down at mouth
 With keen, insatiable drouth;
 Will chant the praises of "Auld Reekie,"
 Of "Haggis braw," and "Cock-a-leekie,"
 With knees and shins aye 'scant of breekie'!

But, hoots awa', we maun resume,
 Lest you, dear reader, fret and fume:
 Broad Ramsey Bay gives good sea-room
 When breezes hurtle from the west,
 Makes storm-tossed bark a welcome guest,
 With life-corps spry to do their best.

By the eastern shoulder-bone—
 Towering headland—Maughold's throne,
 "Neptune's horses" ceaseless moan,
 Charging close-compacted rank
 Of serried rock on either flank;
 In offing, great "Bahama Bank,"
 Dang'rous heap on ocean's bed,
 Yet has "Jack" but little dread—
 "Trinity's" beam is overhead!

Passing south, now reach we soon
 Fair Glen Mona, bonnie Dhoon,
 Where the streamlets softly croon
 Lullabies to the banks and braes,
 Through the glorious summer days,
 While sweet songsters pipe their lays;

But when summer days are o'er
 And the songsters sing no more,
 Bounding with torrential roar—
 Leaping the rugged cliffs adown,
 Where, polled from monarch's stately crown
 The fallen leaves lie dank and brown.

Note here, how Nature's diverse ways
 Compel again the wondering gaze
 With frowning brows and rocky base;
 Mark, too, the force of human will,
 How feats of engineering skill
 O'ercame the steep and toilsome hill.

Famed Laxey Glen, with bijou bay,
 Metallic veins and "Head of Clay,"
 Will form our theme another day.

Again, by wilderness of rock
 To Groudle, where the masses flock
 To view Dame Nature's varied stock;
 Sweet vale of verdure, coan and cave,
 Stout shaft and pond'rous architrave,
 Embosomed by the sad sea wave!

Now, rounding in by Banks's Howe
 Fain must we stand, with our best bow,
 For beauty's queen salute we now:
 Behold Dame Nature's rarest feat—
 Here, in this fair, segmented sheet
 Utility and beauty meet!

The delvers of old Euclid's mine
 Here drew the geometric line—
 The Howe and Head with chord combine.
 How vainly certain scribblers vaunt
 How "Byron swam the Hellespont"—
 This mightier swim was "Dixon's" jaunt!*

But now, methinks, our typing friend
 Is wondering when this jaunt will end,
 And, lest his scruples we offend—
 A prospect really far from pleasant—
 We'll e'en adjourn us for the present
 To meet again—upon this crescent!

* Some living will remember how Will
 Dixon, a Douglas man, would swim from
 headland to headland.

Canto III.



Time was, the old historians say,
 When Viking sailed from o'er the way,
 Full purposed here to "make his hay."
 Still firm the ancient pulse in beat—
 Viking again essays the feat,
 Thus history will itself repeat!

"What's in a name?"—had doleful theme
 Wrapped Shakespeare in a misty dream,
 When simplest things distorted seem?
 A name, forsooth—the string which plays
 That sweetest of all earthly lays—
 The memory of bygone days.

Our Steamship Co., with shrewdest tact,
 Had turned to good account this fact—
 With them to know is but to act.
 How palpable to seeing eyes,
 That in this healthy body lies
 The soul of Mannin's enterprise!

(Methought I'd struck this chord aright:
 'Twas in the silent hours of night
 The inspiration came with might;
 Desire to set it down was keen,
 For night thoughts ever best have been
 With earth's distractions hushed, unseen!

Another note with this to chime,—
 "Ye feeble wits of modern time,
 Just take a hint, observe the rhyme;—

Did ye conceive it was more striking,
 Or was it rather to your liking,
 Thus to miscall the Vik-ing—"Vi-king"?
 Now, lest your memories be tricking
 And leave you still in error sticking—
 Note: V-i-k-i-n-g—Vik-ing!")

Douglas Bay! the witness fair
Of noble aims and virtues rare,
These be our first peculiar care.

Fort Anne! fit type of regal power,
The sometime home and conning tower
Of one who sought in danger's hour
His perilled fellow's need to scan,
His brother's keeper; hence that plan
Which now equips the Lifeboat-man!

"Ye who the brave memorials keep—
Was it to make the angels weep
Ye left him in unhonoured sleep;
Or was it when ye chanced to know
That fortune's tide was ebbing low,
Your sympathies had ceased to flow?"

Traversing once the crowded aisle
Of famed Westminster's stately pile,
I saw, in serried rank and file,
Commemorate from age to age
The poet, the warrior, and the sage,
With those who trod the mimic stage;

And yet, in all that hallowed spot
One record seemed to be forgot—
The name of Hillary was not!
But here, in nigh forgotten grave,
He sleeps, unnumbered with the brave;
No laurel branches o'er him wave,

Unwept, unsung, unknown to fame,
No simple slab e'en bears his name,
The record of a nation's shame!
Methought the very stones should cry:
"Britannia's sons—Oh, fie! oh, fie!
Why do these bones unhonoured lie?" *

* It is nothing less than a national disgrace that the exterior of the vault in St. George's Churchyard where Sir William Hillary, founder of the National Lifeboat Institution, was interred, bears no record of his death and burial, nor even his name; the only inscription on the tomb being the following—on his wife, who predeceased him:—

The Tower of Refuge!—here behold
 A wealth of sympathy untold,
 Rude stones; yet richer than fine gold!
 “Ye thoughtless souls, on pleasure bent,
 Here view one earnest soul’s intent—
 A patriot’s self-raised monument!”

Here must we note another name
 Large writ on Mannin’s scroll of fame,
 Brave “Dawsey”!—in athletic game
 Foremost, when youthful spirits soar.
 ’Twas here the stalwart comrades four
 Unshipped and plied the conq’ring oar,
 Here Dawsey, Rogers, Kewin, and Cain
 Pulled off the prize, times and again—
 Such quartette seek we now in vain.
 But thought, to memory far more dear,
 As mercy’s henchman, scorning fear,
 The hero gained his laurels here;
 In fame’s bright firmament afar,
 No cloud to hide, no stain to mar,
 Naught shines more bright than Dawsey’s
 star!

Within this Vault
 repose the remains of
 EMMA, LADY HILLARY,
 the youngest child of
 Patrick Tobin, Esq., of Middle,
 in this Island,
 and the dearly lamented wife of the
 Hon. Sir William Hillary, Baronet,
 To him who has survived the affectionate
 and devoted partner of his life,
 her loss is irreparable; the remembrance
 of her many virtues inspires him with
 the firm belief that through the Divine Mercy
 there is awarded to her a peace and an
 everlasting resting-place, which he humbly
 hopes to be permitted to share with her
 beyond the grave.
 She departed this life at
 Fort Anne,
 on the 20th June, 1845,
 aged 62 years.

Port Skillion! were thy pebbly beach
 And grassy brows endowed with speech,
 What wholesome lessons could they teach;
 How gentle Archer's gen'rous tip
 Provided platform, pool, and slip,
 For timid bathers' safety dip.

Now turn we round, and witness here
 How zeal develop'd, year by year,
 The stately promenade and pier;
 Note, while we on this latter stand,
 How art and genius hand in hand
 Added a section to the land;

How Douglas, who would solvent be,
 Financed her premier industry
 By borrowing largely from the sea!

Here had we noticed one of late
 Had giv'n good service to the State—
 The first elect chief magistrate;
 Our new-fledged Council's strongest leg
 Was surely that productive egg—
 The fertile brain of Thomas Keig.

These piers withstand the tempest's shock,
 By skilful use of concrete block
 Well founded on the solid rock!

Turning from where the tripper lands,
 Now trip we o'er the silv'ry sands
 Where Castle Mona proudly stands.
 His ducal palace by the sea
 When noble Atholl held the key
 Of Mannin's ancient Sovereignty!

Degenerate now to mere hotel,
 Where Hosts take in the modern swell,
 Though, in good sooth—they do it well.

Through the summer days we see
 Toilers from their toil set free,
 Bent on mirth and jollity:
 By the margin of the bay
 Countless thousands through the day
 Pass the sunny hours away;

Many, on the sands below,
 Watch the tide in ebb and flow,
 Vaguely wond'ring why 'tis so;
 Of "itinerants" quite a hash,
 From the seedy to the flash,
 Ease them of their surplus cash

By the customary tip;
 Some enjoy the short sea-trip,
 Some the energizing dip;
 Of conveyances no lack,
 From the "Corporate toast-rack"
 Down to "Neddy's" humble back!—

All alike agog to cater
 For the children or the pater;
 Note we, just a little later,
 Youth and maid in mazy dances,
 Deftly poisoning "Cupid's lances,"
 Hurl death-dealing amorous glances.

Emancipate from labour's grime
 (For dirt and pleasure never chime),
 Intent on having a good time,
 With outward rig of smartest cut
 The youth of Britain gamely strut
 For a brief space—the upper rut.

In stout-built mansions round the sweep
 Of dyke abstracted from the deep,
 Thrifty housewives their harvests reap;
 While those who in life's battle scored
 Cheerful expend their little hoard
 For good attendance, bed and board.

But here our pen we must lay down,
 Should we survive the printer's frown
 We'll next descant the upper town.



Canto IV.



At the time when poet Gray
Sang "the knell of parting day,"
Darkness brooded o'er the bay;
When the moonless welkin frowned,
All the beauteous crescent round
Slumbered in a gloom profound.

* * * *

Still the memory backward trips
To the days when we were "slips,"
Redolent of tallow dips;
How we would, when school was o'er,
O'er the irksome lessons pore,
Euclid, and such musty lore;
Till such time "the girl from Kaye's"
Brought the dip, whose feeble rays
Lighted us our bed-ward ways.
Then, the tallow's power to foil,
Came "th' incomparable oil,"
Lamp, with wick in sinuous coil,
Burners, globes, and such like plant;
Though vile smelling, we must grant
'Twas a grand illuminant.

But ere all this had come to pass,
A certain noxious, fiery gas
Was foisted on the better class;
"A blessing and a boon to men"
(I hope the term won't break my pen),
Light, carburetted hydrogen!

Though with such fine, high-sounding name
The subtle compound was the same
Which roared with detonating flame
In mine's recess—the dread "fire-damp,"
That awful signal to decamp,
Now baffled by the "Davy Lamp";

Another, foremost in the van
 Of earnest souls who scheme and plan
 The safety of their fellow-man!
 And yet, alas! as seen of late,
 How some rash souls will gang the gate
 Of reckless tampering with fate.

How oft bereavement's wail has said—
 That recklessness unduly sped
 "The congregation of the dead"!

* * * *

But skilful usage, at the present,
 Has lift the mantle from the crescent
 By dint of mantles incandescent.
 Yet some, with pardonable pride,
 A higher hobby to bestride,
 Would have the scene "electrified"!

But now we must, from scenes so bright
 (Perchance our theme has waxed too
 "light"),

Resume our reconnoit'ring flight;
 Note here the teaching of old Time—
 How sanitation in its prime
 Had triumphed o'er the old regime,

The old-time fever-laden drain
 Consigned to subterranean main,
 Will ne'er offend the sense again;
 Mark how the wise "improvement scheme"
 So well devised, would almost seem
 The realisation of a dream!

Note the sweet, hygienic plum—
 How spacious, airy streets had come
 To oust the whilom foetid slum;
 So sweet the plum, that some implore—
 "Ye city fathers, give us more"!
 But to the suburbs now we soar,

Where Nature her best art had spent
 And Art its aid to Nature lent
 To gain the fair environment.

The Nunnery! Here may we trace
 The footsteps and abiding place
 Of those who would the Church embrace;
 Turned from the world's distracting care,
 There seeking in seclusion fair
 The peace which passeth all compare!

What varied beauties here displayed,
 Nature with Art's best gems inlaid,
 The flowering shrub, the grassy glade,
 Dark-bosomed stream skirting about,
 In sluggish coursing, "long drawn out,"
 Hides from the view the nimble trout;

The woodland monarchs soar aloft,
 With stately crowns, "when winds breathe-
 soft,"

Furnish a leafy platform oft
 For councils of the cawing rook;
 On velvet sward, in shady nook,
 The thoughtful read the earth's best book;

With sun in his declining hour,
 Borne on the air with subtle power
 Sweet scents from many a fragrant flower;
 Peeping the shelt'ring trees between,
 The mansion stands, with walls unseen,
 Clothed with a mantle of ivy green.

Retiring now by river bank,
 Note we the guard on either bank
 Of flowering vegetation rank.
 Through meadow green, by tinkling rill,
 Reach we the old-time Pulrose Mill,
 Its whirring wheels now hushed and still.

Note on this road the ancient "saddle"
 Where old-time bogies sat a-straddle
 (Though some esteem this naught but
 twaddle!);

And just beyond this point we mark,
 Nestles the stately home and park
 Of Mannin's legal patriarch.

Hail! Drinkwater, halest of men;
 What held thee in this earthly pen
 Beyond the threescore years and ten?

Was't sterling judgment to the core,
 With honest use of legal lore,
 Gave thee the added twenty-four?

Kirk Braddan next—the sacred spot
 Where sainted Drury, ne'er forgot,
 For thousands tied the marriage knot!
 The dear old parson, honoured name
 On Mannin's sacred scroll of fame;
 Brave, giant heart in giant frame!

Here must we strongly deprecate
 The vandalism displayed of late—
 Was God's own acre out of date?
 Was it not callousness inbred,
 Thus to profane, with ruthless tread,
 The sanctuary of the dead?

Now, soaring at our own sweet will,
 In lovely vale beyond the hill,
 Note we the good, industrial mill;

Though Mannin's industries grow lax,
 Still turned to good account the flax,
 Providing schooners, sloops, and smacks
 The "wings of commerce"—may it thrive,
 Continue very much alive,
 In future years, a busy hive.

Another charming seat—Cronkbourne;
 Another here did Mannin mourn
 Who lately did her halls adorn;
 Strong on her legislative floor,
 Still foremost 'mong the "Twenty-four,"
 The old time-honoured name of Moore.

Just o'er the brow stands Willaston,
 Home of a living, legal gun,
 Golden opinions had he won,
 Pledged to the interests of the King;
 Yet firm, with voice in manly "Ring,"
 The needy ones in front to bring;
 Compassed about with legal strife,
 Evinced he, 'mid dissensions rife,
 The possibilities of life.

Now halt we next by Marathon,
Home—ere his pilgrimage was done—
Of Mannin's best-beloved son;

Whom fortune had not left behind,
Yet was he uniformly kind—
True sympathy is never blind;
Full well he knew the humble folk
Who groaned beneath misfortune's yoke,
These would his sympathies evoke;

Resolved his role of life should be
Unostentatious charity.
No braggart of his deeds was he—
To liquidate kind fortune's score,
Entered the dwellings of the poor
To turn the wolf outside the door.

Full loyal had he ever been
To King, to Queen, to King and Queen,
Three generations had he seen,
Housed in his tenement of clay
By loving labours day by day,
While slothful souls had passed away.

(Your pardon, reader, here I pray—
Who studies our death-roll to-day
Will bear me out in what I say)
Though death will sometimes play us pranks
And snatch some from our younger ranks,
Longevity! thy name is Manx!

Glencrutchery next—methinks 'twas here
Resided one who knew not fear,
Brave Sherwood of the bygone year,
Stout foeman in the legal tussle;
Ever, in legislative bustle,
Equipped with hardy, mental muscle.

Th' adjustment of Port Erin debt
With daily mail from o'er the "wet,"
These, Mannin will not soon forget.
There now resides one just as keen,
No better counsel have we seen
Than sturdy, honest Thomas Kneen;

A sterling and an upright judge,
Whom none can from his purpose budge.
None will the highest honour grudge.
But now the printer says "Renague";
We'll now no more his patience plague,
But meet again—at Bemahague.



Canto V.



When Rushen in its glory shone,
 Ere Douglas had in stature grown—
 It was the legislative zone,
 Court of the august powers that be;
 Gov'nor and self-elected Key
 Controlled from thence the land and sea.

But what time Douglas forged ahead,
 And Rushen's former prestige fled,
 The voice of reason plainly said:
 "We're plodding in an awkward groove,
 Our sense of fitness now to prove,
 We must these ancient courts remove;

'Tis plainly manifest of late
 We never shall be up to date
 While inconveniencing the State;
 No more we'll ride here cock-a-hoop,
 To guide the craft from danger's loop,
 The captain's post is not the poop,
 For good lookout both fore and aft
 When danger menaces the craft,
 'Tis folly thus to stand abaft."
 Thus Rushen reached (excuse the trope)
 The end of its controlling rope—
 'Twas all paid out with Governor Hope!

* * * *

Now, glancing backward through the years,
 Behold, where Fame's great flag uprears,
 One name in golden sheen appears;
 Who regulated, for his flock,
 The errant legislative clock?
 That soldier-statesman—Governor Loch!
 With courage, grace, and skill endued,
 The noble course he had pursued
 Earned Mannin's lasting gratitude.

And now another honoured name
 Inscribed on Britain's roll of fame,
 Raglan!—who led her troops to tame
 The Russian Bear!—with martial pride
 The rigours of that clime defied,
 In honour and in harness died!

Note how, since time had first begun,
 The patriot's spirit still would run
 From sire to son, from son to son;
 Thus Raglan sees a void to-day,
 While some at "blind-man's-buff" will play,
 And fritter our life's-blood away;

Alas! that e'er it should be said
 Britannia's soul is well-nigh dead,
 Has th' Anglo-Saxon spirit fled?
 Alas! that some of feeble sense
 Would risk the "pounds" to spare the
 "pence";

Has greed of gain made men so dense,
 As grudge the "needful" to disburse
 To avert war's foul and blasting curse,
 Which renders evils ten times worse?
 Fie, fie! ye addle-pates—why so,
 Why unequipped to meet the foe—
 Could force of folly farther go?

Refreshing to find one who cares—
 A grain of wheat among the tares—
 Who would have peace, for war prepares!
 Ye false economists—beware!
 The wolf is watching from his lair!
 Would you have peace?—for war prepare!

* * * *

Mannin's Vice-regal Lodge now stands
 With sunny aspect, and commands
 The fairest scene of all her lands;
 Restored and beautified of late,
 By builder's art brought up-to-date;
 Although some carping critics prate,
 No one for such detraction cares,
 The Lady of the Isle declares
 The mansion with the best compares!

Long may it be their dwelling-place,
Whose kindly hearts and gentle grace
Endear them to our ancient race.

Spacious and trim the lawn appears,
Recalling scenes of bygone years
When Loch reviewed the Volunteers,
Ere Britain's sons had grown supine
And shirked the voluntary line
Whereat some earnest souls repine;

May spirits chilled again wax warm
Ere threat'ning clouds break into storm—
Resume that note—"Riflemen form"!

* * * *

Kiondroghad! * dearest spot on earth,—
Of what inestimable worth
Is that one spot which gave us birth!
'Twas here, just by the dear old church,
Seated on magisterial perch,
My honoured sire had swayed the "birch";

With sainted Howard led the chant—
Th' athletic parson—ministrant
And type of Christ's Church Militant;
With milk of kindness brimming o'er,
Ne'er turned the needy from his door,
But shared his broth-pot with the poor!

A glen beyond, where beauty lurks,
No fairer patch in Nature's works,
In rustic parlance—"Molly Quirk's";
Clustered around the ruined mill
The bramble and the bush distil
Sweet scents, the ambient air to fill.

The White Bridge-hill, inspiring fears
Of goblins grim and such bugbears;
The lumb'ring coach of former years
Would toilsome wind to reach the top,
Then came the ever-welcome stop.
All bundling in then—neck and crop,

* Onchan Village, birthplace of the writer.

Would quickly reach the Half-way House,
Where "bona-fide" clause allows
The Sabbatarian carouse!

A mile below, 'mong smiling lands,
The ancient parish temple stands,
Preserved, restored by loving hands;
Sweet influence o'er the spirit shed
These relics of an age long sped,
And hallowed sanctum of the dead!

Just farther on—the hill Baldrine,
While climbing down the steep incline
We note another ancient line—

The "Cloven Stones," just over yonder,
Oft in my childish days I'd wonder
What clave these ancient slabs asunder!
Thereby a wondrous tale doth hang—
Whene'er they hear the church-bells clang
These riven slabs together bang!

This, too, oft puzzled me in youth,
Yet marvel not, for in good sooth
The tale is just the simple truth;
"Wonders in heaven and earth there be
Undreamt of yet by you or me
In our obtuse philosophy!"

* * * *

Below, another charming glen
Commands attention from our pen,
No fairer spot in human ken;
'Twas here, the old historians say—
In hermit's cave beside the bay,
Escaped from dungeon o'er the way,
The noble Duchess refuge sought
Until such time the vessel brought
Deliverance—well-nigh was it wrought,
One faithful servant by her side,
The fierce, pursuing troop defied,
And nobly for his mistress died! *

* The Duchess of Gloucester, *vide* Manx Society, vol. xvi.

Ah! noble dame, sad was thy fate,
 The victim, thou, of jealous hate—
 Dragged from thy high and gentle state
 To loathsome cell—banished for aye
 From kindred, home, from light of day,
 To pine thy blighted life away!

Ascending now, just o'er the rise
 The parish church before us lies,
 With steeple pointing to the skies,
 The worthy vicar brimming o'er
 With Mannin's old historic lore,
 Enriched her literary store.

Just for a moment we would fain
 Recall to mind good "Parson Caine,"
 With bearing, speech, and manners plain,
 Advised his hearers, when they'd sup,
 To shun th' intoxicating cup—
 "Lest it beguile you—give it up!"

* * * *

While we the downward path pursue
 (Please, reader, do not misconstrue),
 Famed Laxey Glen breaks on the view;
 With what emotions of delight
 Doth each enthusiastic wight
 At first behold th' entrancing sight!

Nature and art their trades here ply,
 Each strives the other to outvie
 To please and fascinate the eye:
 The verdant slopes, the pine-clad hills,
 The sparkling of the bounding rills—
 Panacea for a host of ills;

Dame Nature here in gleeful course,
 Had ambled on her favourite horse,
 The purple ling, the golden gorse
 Mark out the progress of her jaunt,
 The feathered choirs her praises vaunt
 The livelong day, with merry chant.

Cottages, white as winter's hoar,
 Like snowdrops dot the landscape o'er,
 Now grouped in cluster half a score.

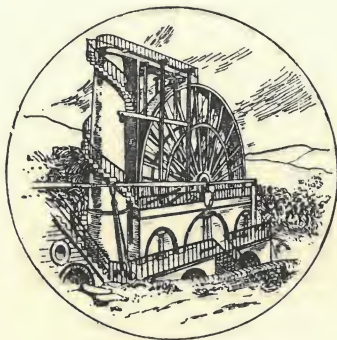
Now perched on overhanging brow,
Like figurehead upon the prow,
Smiling benign on all below.

Note these vast heaps of sparry glint,
Refuse eject from earth's great mint—
Tokens of strenuous labour's dint;
The muddy stream, the washing floor
To sift and cleanse the precious ore,
Clear evidences these, and more

Above, below, around we see,
Of Mannin's mining industry;
In former years, recurs to me,
How troops of stalwart miners bold
Would probe the depths of earth's dark
hold

To gain the lead which turned to gold;

Ah, may the good time come again
When hundreds more, with might and main
Will cleave the rich, metallic vein!
But now I hear the supper peal,
And lest I miss that favourite meal,
We'll meet again—at Laxey Wheel.



Canto VI.



On massive pillars, bound with steel,
Majestic hangs the mammoth wheel;
Each loyal villager must feel
A touch of pardonable pride
Did this fair glen hold nought beside—
By none this tribute is denied;

Conceived and born on yonder slope,
Baptized in her own name (no trope)
By Lady Isabella Hope;
Grand monument of native skill,
Casement's indomitable will *
And genius here are cherished still.

Here branching off, a scene of joy,
The charming vista of Glen Roy,
Nature and art in sweet alloy;
'Twas enterprise and shrewd foresight
Produced in glen and wooded height
A prospect of supreme delight.

Sweet, lithesome lasses here we meet,
With smiling faces, trim and neat,
Which calls to mind the wondrous feat
Achieved by some ingenious blade—
The great Manx "bull," whose premier grade
Quite throws the Irish in the shade—

"To make the most of earthly joys
In quiet fun or mirthful noise,
'The Laxey girls are just the boys!'"

* * * *

But, reader, casting off our tether,
Resume we now our jaunt together
Over the hills of gorse and heather,

* The great wheel was constructed by Casement, engineer, a Laxey man.

Across Dhoon Glen we now must trip
Above the wooded, seaward dip,
And rounding by the northern hip—

Majestic, here before us stands
Barrule, who homage due commands,
Monarch of Maughold's smiling lands;

Just by his tail in former days,
The poet Kennish wrote his lays,
Ere we had fall'n on modern ways;
Smoothly the tales flowed from his pen
Of Mannin's ways and Mannin's men,
Yet writ he his own "tail"—R.N.!

And just below, the vision sweet
Of Ballaglass, where youthful Pete
And Kate would lave their naked feet,
Then, couched beside the gurgling rill,
Full innocent, as children still,
Would "loop the loop," and think no ill!*

Now downward to the headland bold—
'Twas here, in history we are told,
At least, so says the legend old,
Saint Maughold, thus the tale begins,
Came in a coracle of skins,
Purposed to expiate his sins;

Turned from his bandit ways so vain,
Resolved, in penalty and pain
A meed of greatest good to gain;
Neither was he left in the lurch,
But rose to lead our ancient Church,
Let none his memory besmirch.

Saint Bridget (thus the tale doth run),
The pious, saintly Irish nun,
To help the work so well begun,
At Maughold's hands received the veil,
And thenceforth shunned the genus male,
For ever in the Church's pale.

* *Vide* Hall Caine's "Manxman."

Most precious relics here exist,
 Memorials of the age of mist,
 Of antiquarian's love—the gist;
 Hard by here, too, the gossips tell,
 Exists a certain wondrous well,
 O'er which was cast some mystic spell,

To heal all kinds of human ill,
 Dispensing thus with draught and pill,
 Saving, perchance—"that little bill";

Thither the old, the young and fair
 When stressed with ailments, would repair,
 And in the saint's own stony chair
 To quaff the waters, sit demure.
 (This was to expedite the cure
 And make assurance doubly sure!)*

All loyal Manxmen must revere
 And hold in memory ever dear
 One who was born and buried here,—
 Who governed 'midst appalling strife,
 When Indian Mutiny was rife,
 Preserving peace—a noble life!†

A bounding line, drawn from Port Mooar
 By th' old Hibernian to Ballure—
 Now would we fain say "Traa dy liooar,"
 Dear reader, cast a glance around,
 There lies a "happy hunting ground,"
 Methinks here every sight and sound

We see and hear on hill and plain
 Are reminiscent of "Hall Caine,"
 King of Romance, who here did reign,
 The banner of the truth unfurled
 To set before a thinking world
 How virtue from its throne is hurled!

His childhood's home here, just above,
 Ere simple-hearted Pete did prove
 The pangs of unrequited love;

* Rev. J. Quine's "Isle of Man Illustrated."

† General Sir Mark Cubbon.

When wayward Kate—"maid of the mill,"
 Had sacrificed her better will
 To thus dishonour "Hymen's Bill!"*

Of witching, eerie, sweet Ballure,
 What wondrous stories yet endure,
 Though of their truth by no means sure,
 'Tis thus the old romancer writes—
 "Held it such measure of delights,
 The paradise of elves and sprites!"

Again, Barrule, with lordly mein,
 Majestic frowns upon the scene—
 The northern plain of Mannin Veen;

Observe we how the monarch's drest,
 With purple heather for his vest,
 The "royal stud" upon his breast
 Of "Albert Tower"—where Albert hied,
 And all the beauteous scene espied,
 "Professor Kelly" for his guide!

Thenceforward did that worthy stand,
 "Razor and strop at your command,"
 The real "High Kelly" of the land;
 And added to the shaving job—
 To make the angler's bosom throb—
 Allurements for the "finny gob"!

Well do we mind good Governor Hope's
 Terrific pace o'er hills and slopes
 Ere the Queen's yacht cast off her ropes
 To greet his Sovereign did he strive.
 Alas! too late did he arrive,
 And ne'er forgot that "hopeless drive"!

Now down this road, toward the sands,
 Note where the giant fuschia stands
 And claims attention at our hands.
 'Twas here Dame Nature, ever good,
 Conceived, and in most lavish mood,
 Produced the largest of its brood!

* *Vide* Hall Caine's "Manxman."

Now, just a little farther down,
 We reach the ancient Ramsey Town,
 Where now her prestige and renown?
 When "Gibson's" sturdy enterprise
 Had made her, with industrial guise,
 "The cynosure of neighbouring eyes."

With iron will did he engage
 To stand abreast this iron age,
 Which then had reached its earlier stage;
 Recked not expenditure of cash
 To make the furnace roar and flash,
 With bellow's blast, and anvil's clash;

And Douglas sent delightful trips
 Such time they launched the goodly ships.
 In graceful sliding down the slips;
 Alas! no more, as Dibdin sang,
 Do brawny smiths the anvils bang,
 No more the pond'rous hammers clang;

Vanished the scene of vigorous push,
 Stilled the old shipyard's roar and rush,
 Its life exchanged for a gloomy hush!
 The forges quenched, the hammers mute—
 The Mooragh Lake, the new pursuit,
 Forms but a sorry substitute!

Another record on this page—
 From manhood's prime to honoured age.
 Good Parson Paton did engage
 To do his Heavenly Master's will,
 All things to all, his maxim still,
 Thus strove his mission to fulfil.

Skyhill! what memories round thee cling,
 How th' Ossianic bard would sing
 The prowess of the warrior king,*
 How Godred Crovan of renown,
 Like wolf upon the fold swooped down
 And seized the trophy, Mannin's crown;

* Tatwallin's chant. Manx Soc. vol. xxx.

Yet was it a hard-fought field,
 The troop thy wooded slope concealed
 Had forced the men of Man to yield!
 Thou sanguinary scene of yore,
 The warlike chant, the battle's roar,
 Are heard on thy fair crown no more!

Below, the mansion of Milntown,
 There dwelt the Christians of renown,
 The wearers oft of wig and gown;
 Their generations dating back
 To periods when, with Celtic smack,
 Manx names were prefixed with a Mac!

Sweet Glen of Auldyn just beyond,
 Where Nature in her mood most fond
 Luxuriates with flower and frond;
 When troubled spirits seek release
 And from their worldly cares would cease,
 A haven here of rest and peace.

But ceasing now must be our care:
 We'll meet again should all be fair,
 Upon the coast of sweet Lezayre.



Canto VII.



When Genius sought a resting-place
Among the sons of Mannin's race,
She stopped before one gentle face;
No guile was there, no shade of frown,
Then entered she and laid her down,
And called her dwelling—T. E. BROWN!

Deftly her bobbin she unwound,
And shedding sweetest influence round,
Proclaimed the tenant he had found!
Here patriotism had found a vent,
True patriotism his high intent,
And from this course he never bent;
Ne'er blushed he for his native sod,
But e'er avowed, where'er he trod,
He loved his country, and his God!
And when the ransomed saints shall stand
In sweet communion, hand in hand,
Again he'll dwell in SUNNYLAND!*

* * * *

Now, reader, it is time we hied
Across these verdant hills of Bride,
Here note we, with a touch of pride—
With Mannin's industries at fault,
Earth executes a demi-volt
And starts the course afresh with—salt!
May this new-comer thrive amain,
And rouse these, who have dormant lain,
Like Phoenix, into life again!
Now southward, o'er the hills again
Pass we by Andreas' sacred fane,
Whose bell-tower sweeps the northern plain

* The poet's residence on the brows of Lezayre.

Of fertile lands from coast to coast ;
 Archdeacons here, a goodly host
 Have ministered, the strong outpost

Of Mannin's Church ;—again we soar,
 Encount'ring, by the western shore,
 The cawing rooks of Ballamoar ;
 Here Jurby stands, a beacon tower,
 On heights succumbing to the scour
 Of grim old Ocean's mighty power.

A district here, called Mallow Lough,
 Was once, they say, Lake Myerscough,
 Now oft, with rain, a miry slough !
 (I don't know how this is for rhyme,
 Or how the words together chime,
 But please to make it do this time.)

Now must we to the eastward hurry
 By th' old-time Fort of Ballachurry,
 So well preserved through ages' worry ;
 Relic of Mannin's warlike pomp,
 By bog secured from time's great romp,
 There's merit even in a swamp !

Sweet, ivied temple of Lezayre,
 Around thee cluster beauties rare—
 Holds not the earth a scene more fair,
 On smiling plain, on wooded height,
 Nature exerts her wondrous might
 To fill the soul with sheer delight !

Around th' adjacent mountain spur,
 In Anglo-Saxon—we must "slur."
 (But should you to this word demur—
 In the vernacular it's "slew!")
 Famed Sulby Glen bursts on the view,
 Here we must fain descant anew,

Yet 'twill not be so much amiss,
 The famous glen's so like the Swiss,
 Whose heights would fain, like lovers, kiss ;
 Below, the Sulby's stainless stream,
 Well sheltered from the scorching beam,
 Ripples and pools—the angler's dream ;

The silv'ry trout, swift darting by,
 Watchful, will pause, alert and spry,
 And rise to snap the tempting fly;

'Twas here, when that dread storm had
 brewed,

The wayward Kate, remorse pursued,
 Found refuge in the "tholthan" rude.*

Then, to the left, we must not fail

To note another charming vale,

The upland glen of Narradale:

'Twas here, ere with bright girlhood partin',

The sweet "Molvurra and Milvartin"

Had nothing reck'd of "Kindergarten."†

Now speed we on our way again

Upward, toward the mountain chain,

Although to linger we are fain

Where Tholt-e-Will's bright waters leap,

Cascading down the wooded steep,

Up which the panting tourists creep

To stand upon the lofty poop

And view the mountain chain and loop

From Snaefell, monarch of the group;

'Twas here old Mannin's monarch stood

And all his ancient kingdom viewed,

With several of a younger brood!‡

Observe we here these modern ways,

How lucre seized the banks and braes,

And aught is nought unless it pays—

How climbers once for breath would stop,

Electric coil—their cash to cop—

Unwinds its coil from base to top!

Now back (excuse this backward trip),

Our way lies round the western hip,

Just take a hint, please not to slip

Into these curraghs of Ballaugh!

Reader, this is not meant for chaff,

So, if you please, please not to laugh;

* *Vide* Hall Caine's "Manxman."

† *Vide* J. Quine's "Captain of the Parish."

‡ The Manx Kingdom was of older date
 than its neighbours.

'These fertile lands, I've learned of late,
Were once submerged, in liquid state,
Now partly drained to cultivate;

And, if I really might presume—
A glorious future here doth loom.
Ye sons of those who did exhume
From Stygian gulf this favoured spot,
Arouse ye now, no more bog-trot,
But drain and cultivate the lot!

Just further on stands Bishopscourt,
Where many of a good report
'Gainst evil powers had held the fort
Of Mannin's Church—what memories tender
This scene will in the thoughts engender,
And bid the soul due honour render;

Recorded here on history's clock
How saintly Wilson oft would stock
The corn, to feed his famished flock!
Who has not heard that earnest joke?
How worthy "Snip" thus boldly spoke—
"A single button on your cloak?"

Ah, sir, with such a meagre cover
The 'button-folks' won't live in clover!"
"Why, John, then button it all over!"
'Twas thus the earnest soul replied;
So closely with his God allied
He knew no shred of human pride!

Now passing Michael's sacred fane,
Note how some earnest ones retain
Those ancient monuments again.

Just here, the boy, with lithesome spring,
Raced, with his little sprig of ling,
To catch the chariot of the King.
Wistful was he to cast aboard
The tribute he could just afford,
To this the child's ambition soared;
And Royal Edward, courteous, plain,
At once bade Jehu draw the rein:
"The laddie's hope shall not be vain!"

Thus spake the monarch and the man;
 Man's finest trait, deny it who can,
 Thus to adopt the Master's plan.
 Most surely 'twas a heavenly choice—
 With kingly grace and kindly voice
 To make the childish heart rejoice.

Glen Wyllin here, of double worth,
 Our recent, sad, industrial dearth
 Would fain dispel with "fuller's earth!"
 Although we fain would longer stand
 To view this beauteous "fuschia land,"
 Yet must we yield to time's demand;

Now post we down Craig Willie's Hill—
 But softiv, lest we have a spill,
 And thus incur that "Doctor's Bill";
 Glen Helen now breaks on the sight,
 In deep ravine, on wooded height
 Nature exerts her wondrous might

To feast the eyes, and charm the sense
 With murmuring brook and foliage dense,
 To furnish labour's recompense;
 On grassy sward the wearied feet
 May rest, while in oblivion sweet
 The toiler's pulses calmly beat.

Hushed is the city's busy hum,
 The weariness of life's humdrum
 To this fair spot may never come.

Although to linger we are fain,
 We must resume our trip again;
 Debouching now by Ballacraine,
 Once more we to the eastward turn,
 And skirting Greeba, grim and stern,
 Pass where the "fires of genius burn."*

Here are those wondrous stories told,
 Yet must we not wax over bold
 Or seek to gild refined gold!

* Greeba Castle, the residence of Hall Caine.

Now pass we on our eastward jaunt,
 Close by the foot of Greeba gaunt,
 Saint Trimian's ancient goblin's haunt;
 Crosby, sweet village of the plain,
 Where invalids their health regain,
 Thy prestige may'st thou long retain.

Beyond, the distant hills between,
 Where Martin sketched his heavenly
 scene,*

The paradise of Manmin Veen.

Now pass we by the sacred fane
 Of Kirk Marown, trim, neat, and plain,
 And down a lengthy hill again;
 In valley fair, between the hills,
 We reach th' industrial Union Mills,
 Sweet neighbourhood to 'scape the ills

Imposed in Corporation rates,
 Which that crushing rent-bill inflates,
 And settlement so oft belates.
 But here the present trip must end,
 Lest we should to disorder tend,
 Our course from here must backward bend,

Once more together, if you will;
 To promulgate our coming bill,
 We'll meet again—at Tynwald Hill!

* The "Plains of Heaven."



Canto VIII.



Observe this mingled, motley throng
 Trudging the country roads along
 With gibe and jest and merry song,
 The "class" in phaeton, 'bus, or car,
 Bigwigs of Council, Bench, and Bar,
 With gentle-folk from near and far,
 The Governor, Council, and the Keys,
 Magnates of high and low degrees,
 And Volunteers, as brisk as bees,
 Coroners and Parsons, smart and plain,
 "And all agog, with might and main"
 To celebrate the fête again!

Bright is the sun, the skies are clear,
 With smiling faces draw they near,
 For "Tynwald" comes but once a year!
 In brave procession now they go
 To promulgate, for weal or woe,
 The "bills" which lately plagued them so;

Deemster, and some of lesser note,
 Repeat the lessons learned by rote
 At Mannin's "Witênagemote"!

Sturdy and bold, "Glenfaba Bob"
 Steps forth, and opening wide his "gob,"
 Trots out his "classic"* for the job;
 The Deemster then (like encored song),
 To make it plain to old and young,
 Repeats it in the "vulgar tongue"!

Famed Tynwald Hill, historic mound
 Of earth, from every parish round,
 Through ancient dynasties renowned;
 Thy triple sward would indicate
 A bond of union with the State
 And Mannin's great triumvirate!†

* Manx.

† The Three Legs.

Huge steps, which Phyllis, trim and neat,
 With supple limbs and nimble feet
 Essays to mount, intent to beat
 Her fellow-chits—'mid laughter merry,
 With cheeks outvying rose or cherry,
 But finds the steps are awkward—very!

And now a hasty glance at Peel,
 Home of the mollag and the creel;
 Deepest regret each soul must feel
 For that departing industry,
 When Peel folk, busy as the bee,
 Reaped the rich harvest of the sea!

Inconstant herrin'! love of yore,
 Thy fickleness we all deplore,
 What lured thee thus from Mannin's shore?
 We hail thee—monarch of the main!
 May Mannin's prayers be not in vain
 To bring the old love back again!

* * * *

Slieauwhallin stands, in bold relief,
 The miniature of Teneriffe;
 But speed we on, for time is brief;
 Our way lies over hill and dale,
 And passing by, we must not fail
 To cast a glance at Foxdale vale:

With mining, once in busv state,
 But sadly, at this later date,
 Of Laxey Glen the duplicate.

Here, to the westward, by the way,
 We promised but the other day
 To count the charms of sweet Glenmay.

Dame Nature's handmaids, amply trained,
 With wisdom by experience gained,
 Their several forces here arraigned,
 Each into service now was press'd
 And this fair glen was duly dress'd
 With all the beauties of the rest;

Nor did they stop at this alone—
 Stamped with a beauty all its own,
 'Twas chosen for their Sov'reign's throne;

Its charms, so eerie to the sight
That goblin, boggle, gnome, and sprite
Soon chose it for their court by night

The rustic folk to scare and fright—
At least, so says the historic wight,
And I suppose he must be right;
And yet I should be quite afraid
To vouch for stories of this grade,
I'd sooner call a spade—a spade!

* * * *

Now past Barrule we trip again,
The monarch of the mountain chain
Which dominates the southern plain,
By Dalby, Colby, to Kentraugh,
A former Speaker here—you know—
Who bids th' unruly hold his jaw!

Ah, well! he's "gone"—peace to his manes,
A sturdy scion yet remains,
Of this fair coach to hold the reins!

Here, zealous for the future "catch,"
Our failing industries to patch,
Some fain would "Neptune's chickens"
hatch!

Success to every brood produced,
May Fortune's sympathies unloos'd
Send every chicken home to roost!

Now backward, by Barrule again,
We reach St. Mark's, and mark the stain
Palpable on this southern plain—
How vandalism had rampant grown,
And antiquarians bemoan
The loss of "Godred Crovan's stone"!

Here, overlooking Santon's vale,
Fair Crogga, still in memory's pale
Linked with the honoured name of Quayle;

And further down stands Ronaldsway,
So reminiscent of the day
When Christian gave the Isle away,

And that revolting regicide,
Filled with the lust of power and pride,
The ordinance of Heaven defied!*

* * * *

"King William's" now commands a halt :
Our pen would be in sore default
To pass by Mannin's savouring "salt"—
Though some esteem it not a favour,
'Tis certain that good learning's flavour
Still constitutes the world's best savour ;
When Mannin for the cult was yearning,
Some earnest souls, her need discerning,
Built and equipped this seat of learning,
Whence, through the generations down,
Many went forth to win renown
With sword and cassock, wig and gown :
Stout branches these, well crowned with
 foliage,
Disseminate from that tree of knowledge,
The goodly stem of Mannin's College!
Thou noble pile, had we but leisure,
'Twould surely be our chiefest pleasure
To chant thy praise in fullest measure ;
But time is brief—the tide will run
As ever, since time first begun :
Thus time and tide will wait for none.
Where Hango Hill stands, weird and lone,
Methinks the winds and waves bemoan
Th' untimely fate of Illiam Dhone ;
Frail mortal, was it not most just ?
Dread retribution surely must
O'ertake him who betrays his trust !
Hard by here lived, in modern days,
One for whom none had aught but praise,
Well-versed in Mannin's lore and ways,
He loved her as she loved him, well :
Her future histories will tell
The stainless course of Sir James Gell !

* Cromwell.

Now, Ballasalla, next in turn,
 Sweet clust'ring by the Silverburn,
 Fond recollections here return;
 How reminiscent of the days
 Of youth, when in our childish ways
 We romped the abbey in our plays,

Until such time the village school
 Would ope—according to set rule—
 Where, perched on pedagogic stool,
 Sat “one-armed Watterson,” so stern,
 While we our “a-b-abs” would learn—
 Still o’er these scenes the soul will yearn.*

Here, backward in the days of old,
 Stood Rushen Abbey, famed stronghold
 Of Mannin’s Church, a goodly fold,
 When pious monks and saintly nuns
 To plead for Mannin’s erring sons
 Poured forth their daily orisons;

Last of the monasteries, thou
 Whom earnest souls did well endow—
 Alas! where is their bounty now?

And fondly in the memory still,
 The dear old church upon the hill,
 And good, refined old Parson Gill:
 How, from the school on Sabbath days
 We marched, by way of Cross-four-ways,
 To join our elders’ prayer and praise;

And just above—the glowing kiln
 (I’m glad to say it’s glowing still),
 Where John and Jane worked with a will
 To hew the stone and burn the lime
 Indigenous to Mannin’s clime,
 So useful at the ploughing time.

And just a little farther down
 We pass Great Meadow and Billown,
 Homes of the Moores, of Manx renown;

* A portion of the writer’s boyhood was spent in this neighbourhood.

To Castletown we've quickly pass'd,
And this short trip must be our last,
For time and space are ebbing fast.

Reader, our task is well-nigh done—
Like Mannin's yarn, 'tis plain home-spun—
Just one more spinning will it run ;
If you for that one with me cling,
Our final canto we shall sing
Within the palace of the King!



Canto IX.



THE RUSHEN EPIC.

How Mannin's limestone stands to-day,
Well-nigh impervious to decay,
While baser fabrics melt away!

* * * *

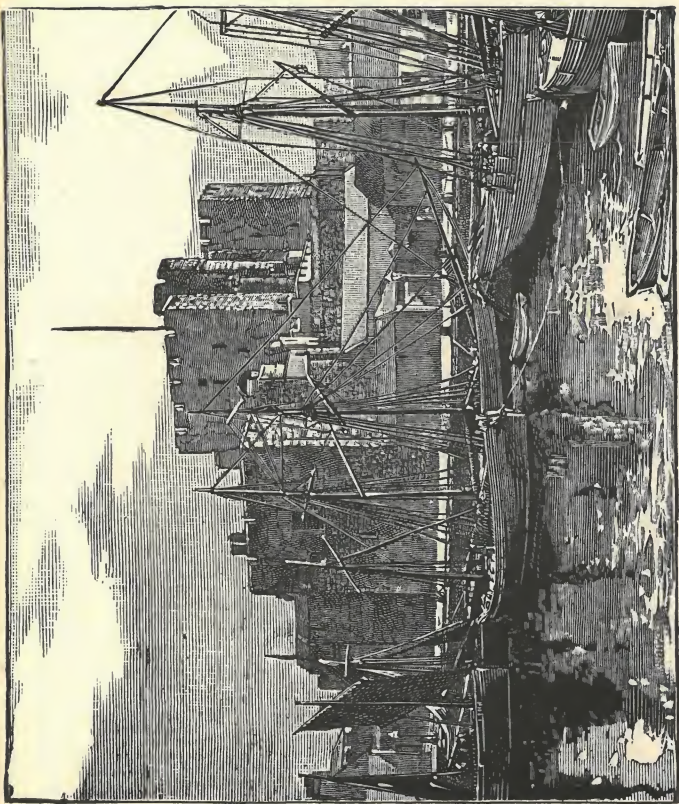
When might was right by force of arms,
And nations dwelt midst rude alarms,
The warlike Dane saw Mannin's charms;
This insulated battle-field,
So oft by silv'ry mists concealed,
Was to his ardent gaze revealed;

A connoisseur of gems was he,
And vowed his shield's device should be
This emerald on an azure sea!
And wily, too—this warlike Dane—
A bloodless victory to gain,
Quietly landed at the Lhane;*

No lives were uselessly destroyed,
And thus the warlike Dane enjoyed
The sweets of conquest unalloyed!
The conqueror, then quickly crowned,
His new-found realm, he quickly found,
Was older than the realms around!

At the four hundred and fortieth year
(These old-time dates are never clear)
Reigned Mannanin Beg Mac-y-Lheir,
After whom, through five centuries down,
Some score of more or less renown
Successively had held the crown;

* In the North of the Island.



And yet they were a motley lot—
 Northumbrian, Scandinavian, Scot,
 Ruled for a time this favoured spot;
 In fact, 'tis thus the record stands—
 The sovereignty of these fair lands
 Perpetually was changing hands;

Something was wrong, 'twas manifest,
 For doubtless each had done his best
 To save his jewel from arrest.

'Tis plain to anyone of sense
 They lacked some adequate defence
 To rout the foe and drive him hence!

Our warlike Dane, astute and keen,
 Soon learned to read the lines between,
 Perceived how foolish they had been;
 And quickly chose, from the more waxy
 Of Mannin's "stars," a trim galaxy,
 And styled this band "The Taxiati";

(But now these ancient "Yeas and Nays,"
 To suit our modern stvlish ways,
 Are styled the four and twenty "Kays"!)
 Then, with these men of good report,
 He quickly formed a "Tynwald Court,"
 And aired his views after this sort:

"Ye men of Mannin, list—ahem!
 To hold secure our Island gem
 We'll build a fortress on the stem!
 With this good limestone just to hand,
 We have the means at our command
 Both time and foeman to withstand!"

Thus spake the monarch,—and ere long
 Had reared a castle, stout and strong,
 To live through ages, ever young!

* * * *

Again the centuries rolled away,
 Yet stood the fortress, strong and gray,
 And showed no symptoms of decay;
 In sooth it had the stronger grown,
 For some who occupied the throne
 Had added something of their own;

While kings went down, like tumbling
 skittle,
 It gained in strength, little by little,
 With here a jot, and there a tittle!
 And thus it stood, and stands, forsooth,
 Nigh emblematic of the truth,
 A vision of perpetual youth!

* * * *

Now, reader, while we stand outside,
 Mark how these towers, in stately pride,
 The ravages of time defied.
 Of outer works, observe the traces,
 This fragment of the ancient glacis,
 Which checked the foe's too ardent paces;
 When he would fain the ramparts vault,
 Obligated to ground his arms and halt,
 And feel himself somewhat at fault,
 While those besieged the ramparts hold,
 That well-devised defence of old,
 To keep the wolf outside the fold;
 Each angle had its snug redoubt,
 Whence troops th' attacking force could
 'rout,
 Alas! now all but one snuff'd out!
 List, on the summit of this tower
 Whose silv'ry note proclaims the hour,
 His gift, when Derby ceased his power,
 For nigh two centuries its knell
 The generations seems to tell
 He loved his ancient kingdom well.
 Here, where the drawbridge droop'd to
 cross
 The depths of the forbidding fosse,
 Trim gardens now recoup the loss;
 Next, pass we these stout walls between,
 For much remains yet to be seen
 And told of Mannin's King and Queen;
 Outbuildings 'fore the inner gate,
 Here Tynwald mustered to debate,
 To sit, and hatch the eggs of State;

Confronting us, the Castle yard,
 So reminiscent of the guard,
 And that dread legend—"Six months
 hard!"

Ah! Rushen, thou concept sublime,
 What idiosyncrasy of time
 Associated thee with crime?

Had'st thou not fall'n on evil days
 When thou receivedst vicious strays
 To purge them of their evil ways?
 Haply a more refining touch
 Released thee from the vandal's clutch;
 Mannin, though mute, rejoices much!

Where gaol accoutrements defiled,
 And prisoners nursed the "iron child" *
 (Grim occupants, who never smiled),
 Free labour had with strenuous dint
 Unearthed old Mannin's "royal mint,"
 Which erst evolved the precious "glint";

From out foul refuse, hard and deep,
 Which long had girt the stately keep
 While memory had seemed to sleep!

The dungeon, deep in mother earth,
 Where captives bade farewell to mirth,
 To wondrous legends gave their birth;
 Of monsters and their monstrous acts,
 Theme which the feeble mind attracts
 More strongly than the strongest facts,

Yet such this fact has ever been—
 Susceptibilities are keen
 When influenced by the "great unseen"!
 Reader, should you be one of these
 With feeble nerves and shaky knees,
 Observe—our function is to please;

So, if you please, 'tis wisest tact
 To leave uncanny fiction's tract
 For scenes of grand historic fact.

* The stone-breaking hammer.

Passing within the inner gate
 Of this grand citadel of State,
 We note the efforts made of late
 Its pristine grandeur to restore,
 Ere barbarisms had glossed it o'er
 On roof and windows, wall and floor;
 Here, zealous to defend the right,
 Deprived of liberty and light,
 The saintly Wilson won the fight;
 Though might o'er right would ride rough-
 shod,
 Meekly he kissed the chast'ning rod,
 And left the issue with his God!*
 Ascending now the winding stair
 We view a spectacle most rare—
 Th' enduring limestone everywhere;
 No creak, portentous of decay
 In fragile pine, when pines away
 The fragile fabric of to-day;
 Above, below, hewn limestone blocks
 Unyielding as granitic rocks,
 Built to withstand a thousand shocks!
 Here note we in the southern tower—
 Minion of Time's resistless power—
 The famous clock proclaims the hour,
 Gift of Britannia's Virgin Queen;†
 This same stone chamber once had been
 Of royal orisons the scene;
 Ye would-be flippant, rev'rent tread,
 'Twas here the venerable dead
 Had worshipped Heav'ns Eternal Head!
 Resuming our ascent once more,
 We notice on this upper floor
 More relics of the days of yore—
 The bronze and flint axe-head and shot,
 Uncouth designs to "hit the spot"
 What time breech-loading guns were not!

* *Vide* Manx History.

† Queen Elizabeth.

Time-honoured prints of land and sea,
 Ere "camera-fiends" had come to be;
 Quaint implements of industry
 When Mannin delved and goodwives span,
 Ere flaunting science came to ban
 The modest handicraft of man!

The mammoth elk, with antlers vast,
 Os framework of an age long past;
 The multifarious plaster cast
 Of runic, Norse mythology,
 A Manxman's work—now honour we
 Enthusiastic P. M. C.!*

Now, standing on the topmost height,
 And having gained a beauteous sight,
 Here muse we on the Derby's might:
 When Lathom had on Stanley smiled,
 The union fair was duly filed
 And stamped—"the eagle and the child,"†

Crest of the Derby of renown,
 Who thence for full three centuries down
 Held, undisputed, Mannin's crown!
 Small wonder he could hold his own
 With this stout castle for his throne!
 Ask for the old "D. I. C." stone,—‡

Ye who would entertain a doubt,
 Or seek this truthful tale to scout,
 'Twill speedily your scruples rout.

Reader—our task has pleasing been,
 Though further traces may be seen
 Of Mannin's ancient King and Queen!
 Imperfect though this sketch, and plain,
 I trust it has not been in vain;
 So, farewell, till we meet again!

* Mr. P. M. C. Kermode, Manx antiquary.

† Crest of the House of Latham, adopted by Sir John Stanley on his union with Isabel of Latham.

‡ A stone recently found, carved with the initials of James and Charlotte Derby.





